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**HCV E2 PROTEIN BINDING AGENTS FOR
TREATMENT OF HEPATITIS C VIRUS INFECTION**

Abstract of the Disclosure

5 The present invention provides a method of treating or
preventing hepatitis C virus infection in a subject which
comprises administering an effective amount of an agent to
the subject, wherein the agent is capable of inhibiting
the attachment of hepatitis C virus onto cells by
10 specifically binding to the hepatitis C virus envelope E2
protein so as to treat or prevent hepatitis C virus
infection. The present invention also provides a method
of identifying a compound which can inhibit the attachment
of hepatitis C virus onto cells and can treat or prevent
15 hepatitis C virus infection in a subject by inhibiting the
binding of hepatitis C virus envelope E2 protein to a
cellular protein associated with hepatitis C virus
attachment onto cells and their entry into cells,
comprising (a) incubating said compound, the hepatitis C
20 virus envelope E2 protein or its variant and said cellular
protein capable of specifically binding to said hepatitis
C virus E2 protein under a suitable reaction conditions,
(b) determining the interactions between the hepatitis C
virus envelope E2 protein or its variant and said cellular
25 protein in the presence of said compound, and (c)
comparing the interactions in step (b) with the
interaction between the hepatitis C virus envelope E2
protein or its variant and said cellular protein in the
absence of said compound so as to identify a compound
30 which can inhibit the attachment of hepatitis C virus into
a cell.

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